Staff photo by Lori McElroy

Tom Wilthers, manager of Sherman's new Wal-Mart store, and his wife Sherry (far right) cut a ceremonial ribbon Tuesday.

Wal-Mart opens 925th store here

by SCOTT MOXLEY
Staff Writer

Grand opening ceremonies at Sherman's 85,500 square feet Wal-Mart turned into a hand-clapping, slogan-shouting pep rally this morning.

"Who's number one?" asked one Wal-Mart executive.

"Store 947," shouted more than 140 employees.

"Who's *really* number one?" the executive asked.

"Store 947's customers," the vocal employees replied.

Bill Foster, representing the Sherman Chamber of Commerce, said, "We've been to a lot of grand openings but this was the most enthusiastic."

Wesley Wright, Wal-Mart operations vice president said, "Sherman, we are tickled to death to be in your town. We want to please you. Let's show the folks in Sherman what we can do for them."

"I feel real good about this store and this area," said Mark Hite, store planning supervisor.

Wal-Mart's enthusiasm about Sherman equalled the city's excitement about the Arkansas-based company.

Mayor Dean Gilbert said, "Sherman and Wal-Mart are partners in this venture. I think this is the first store to take advantage of the new (Highway) 75. We hope there will be many more."

Foster said, "What's good for Wal-Mart — what's good for America — is good for Sherman. Everybody's going to benefit from your planning."

The 10 Wal-Mart executives who attended the hour-long festivities showed why the company is recognized as one of the top-managed corporations in the U.S.

David Glass, Wal-Mart president, told the gathering, "You don't work for anybody — you work *with* Wal-Mart and that's really the key to our success.

"Our folks are real enthusiastic. They get excited about the business," Glass said, after all the employees had taken a customer service oath.

"We'll do well if we deserve to do well in Sherman," Glass said to city representatives. "Sherman does not owe us anything — in fact, we owe them."

Tom Wilthers, store manager, said although the store didn't officially open until today, more than 18,000 Sherman area shoppers took advantage of the informal opening Saturday.

"Saturday was extremely good for us. It surpassed our expectations and that was with no real advertising — just word of mouth. We've had a lot of positive comments about the store already," Wilthers said Monday afternoon.

"People in this area have wanted a Wal-Mart store for years and it's been a long time

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